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(47)

CIA 'Big Bird' Satellite Manual Was Allegedly Sold to Soviets

By Thomas O'Toole
and Charles R. Babcock
Washington Post Staff Writers

A former officer of the Central Intelligence Agency who was arrested last week for passing secrets to the Soviets is alleged to have sold them a technical manual describing the "Big Bird" photographic satellite that spies on the Soviet Union from earth orbit.

Intelligence sources said yesterday that the top-secret document was gone for almost a year without being noticed. A CIA search for the manual began only after FBI agents asked whether it was missing.

The loss of the manual has led to a wholesale review of CIA security procedures, both by the CIA and the Sen-

ate Intelligence Committee, sources said.

The Big Bird is no more than 5 years old. More than a dozen of the 12-ton units have been put into earth orbit by the United States to take pictures of Soviet missile silos, submarine bases, naval installations, airfields and troop movements.

The photographs taken by Big Bird are so precise that they can distinguish between civilians and people in military uniform and can pick out the makes of automobiles, even read their license plates.

When onetime CIA man William P. Kampiles was arrested in Chicago last week, federal government sources

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Further Nitrite Research Urged

The MIT scientist who contended that sodium nitrite causes cancer in rats says his research should be confirmed in other animals before any extensive ban goes into effect.

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said Kampiles had done the United States "preparation for release" of technical material to the Soviet Union.

The government sources last week did not mention that Kampiles had allegedly dealt away the details of Big Bird, only that he had sold secrets of a classified system known as KH-11.

Intelligence sources said yesterday that KH-11 was the CIA code name for Keyhole-11, which is the Big Bird photographic reconnaissance satellite. These sources said it is difficult to measure how much the Soviets have profited from the manual describing Big Bird. They cannot build such a satellite of their own from the manual, but they may be able to identify weaknesses in the satellite and protect their secret installations accordingly, some experts suggested.

One source said it would do the United States very little harm, since the sale of the manual did not give the Soviets the ability to stop the satellites from taking pictures.

"The Russians know this satellite has been in orbit taking pictures of their country for some time," the source said. "Getting their hands on the manual doesn't stop the satellite and doesn't stop the pictures."

Senate Intelligence Committee members asked pointed questions of CIA officials during a closed-door briefing on the case last Friday, according to sources. Members wanted to know how Kampiles, 23, a low-level "watch officer" who left the CIA after eight months in 1977, allegedly could have walked off with a top-secret document without it being noticed for nearly a year.

The CIA already has started an internal review of its security procedures because of the Kampiles case, sources said yesterday.

The son of Greek immigrants, Kampiles was arrested a few days after he had allegedly told an FBI agent about selling the secret satellite manual to a Soviet diplomat in Athens earlier this year.

Intelligence sources said the FBI became suspicious of Kampiles when he wrote a letter to a CIA colleague saying he was in contact with and had received money from the Soviets. He allegedly volunteered to spread "disinformation" to them. The reference to money alerted federal officials, because it is a known Soviet intelligence technique never to pay anyone without receiving documents in return, sources said.

Kampiles was questioned by an agent from the FBI's Washington field office early last week, and explained finally how he had contacted the Soviets on a trip to Athens in February, according to sources.

At one meeting with the Soviets in Athens, Kampiles allegedly turned over the cover page and an illustration of the KH-11 satellite. A few days later he returned and gave the rest of the manual to a security officer named Michael, according to sources. In return, he accepted and signed a receipt for the cash.

A CIA security officer told the FBI last week that a copy of the satellite manual assigned to the center where Kampiles worked was missing. It is not known whether other classified documents also are missing, sources said yesterday.

Kampiles is a 1975 graduate of Indiana University. He worked at the CIA from March to November of last year — at a GS-7 scale, paid less than \$15,000 a year.

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Though intelligence community officials have voiced fears about proceeding with the case because of the sensitive satellite material involved, there seems little doubt that the Justice Department will move to indict Kampiles. "We fully intend to go forward," a spokesman said yesterday.

Sen. Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyo.), a member of the intelligence committee, said yesterday that the allegations against Kampiles raise serious questions about CIA security procedures. "They're forever telling us how weak the Congress is [in protecting secrets]. To my knowledge nothing close to this has come out of either house."

Sources close to the CIA said they were surprised that a watch officer had access to a document describing what is generally regarded as the most secret intelligence satellite built by the United States.

"Normally, these documents are kept in a safe and are never kept anywhere near a watch office," one source said. "The whole thing sounds a little like sloppy secrecy."

The Big Bird satellite is a multibillion-dollar program managed jointly by the Pentagon and the CIA. The satellites were launched from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base into a polar orbit that takes each of them over the same place on earth every two weeks.

The Big Bird satellites are equipped with cameras that take photographs in black-and-white, color and infrared. The cameras send their photos back by electronic means, then parachute capsules containing the exposed film down to earth. The pictures they take have been described by some who have seen them as "remarkable."

"The resolution of these cameras is superb," one source said. "There's almost no way you can camouflage things or hide things from these cameras."

Is Learning

For the first time this year, President Carter has left Washington without his tail between his legs. He went off to vacation with his family in the West looking like a man in command, and this city, which longs for leadership as it longs for a cool breeze, was cheering him on his way.

The last two things Carter did before leaving town were quintessentially presidential. He vetoed a major piece of legislation, the defense authorization bill, because it violated his sense of priorities in an area of traditional executive responsibility—the national defense. And he managed, through personal intervention and pressure, finally to break the logjam in the Senate-House conference committee on the natural-gas bill.

When he comes back after Labor Day, it will be to another uniquely presidential mission: direct, high-stakes diplomacy with Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat at Camp David.

The three actions exemplify what presidents get paid to do, and what Carter did all too rarely in his first 18 months in office. They are decisive, well-timed and personal initiatives in matters of overriding national importance. They make one want to believe that Susan Clough, the president's personal secretary and a woman of both candor and good sense, may be correct when she tells a reporter: "You are right to criticize us as slow learners. But we are learning."

The most important thing the president is learning is how to use his time, his resources and his energy to shape events. Until quite recently, he was listening to everybody in Congress, the administration and the world who wanted to see him. He was giving comfort to all of them, indicating sympathy if not commitment to their points of view. But he was not defining the choices for them from a presidential perspective or enlisting their assistance for his objectives.

Much of the time, he was buried in his briefing papers, studying the details of issues, as if preparing for an examination, rather than equipping himself to lead on matters of national concern.

That approach was not working, and he has begun to change. Meetings with congressional delegations are less harmonious, but the congressmen come away with a clearer sense of what the president wants. His evenings are less consumed with briefing books, and there is more time for talks with Rosalynn Carter and other counselors. His public schedule is more purposeful, and the message he is delivering in speeches and meetings less obscure.

He is learning that comprehensive proposals are often indigestible on Capitol Hill and unacceptable in a country lacking visible political consensus. He has discovered the virtues of pragmatism and incrementalism on the energy bill, and he says he will apply that lesson next year to welfare reform and other issues as well. He says he will shorten his agenda and concentrate his efforts on what is important to achieve—and achievable.

For all those signs of learning, there remain serious causes for concern. The president appears less willing to concede the weak spots in his own administration than almost anyone else in the White House. His adamant insistence that he sees no need for any change in the Cabinet or the senior staff looms as a major impediment to his making changes in the period immediately after the November election, when they are most easily accomplished.

To be sure, he has allowed—and encouraged—a marked expansion and upgrading in his political liaison staff in recent months. But he needs a comparable improvement in some of the substantive areas of government—the management of the budget and economy, for example—and that will not occur unless he seeks it himself. Without such changes, the duration and consistency of his recovery will remain doubtful.

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Still, one finds oneself agreeing, once again, with the judgment of Rep. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), who has—more consistently than anyone else I know—written wisely and dispassionately about the presidents since coming to Congress 14 years ago.

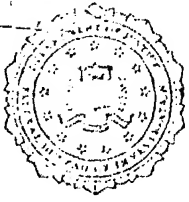
"I have the feeling," Hamilton wrote his constituents recently, "that the president has been hesitant to use presidential power, but that he is now settling comfortably into the Oval Office. It seems that he is beginning to master the intricate relationships in Washington and to maneuver among them, as a president must if he is to achieve his goals. He has had a long 'shakedown cruise,' but he has been blessed with good fortune, at least in the sense that he has not had to confront a dangerous crisis."

He is now intervening boldly in legislative battles, tackling long-ignored problems and having some success.

There is speculation about a one-term presidency for him, but surely such talk is premature. Presidential historians advise us to watch the crucial third year of a president, and Mr. Carter is still several months away from it.

How well he uses those next few months—and particularly what changes of personnel he makes—may well determine whether the current guarded optimism about the Carter presidency lasts longer than his Western vacation.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20535

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 17, 1978

FBI Agents today arrested William P. Kampiles, aged 23, of Chicago, Illinois, on espionage charges according to an announcement by FBI Director William H. Webster.

Mr. Webster advised that Kampiles was arrested on the basis of a complaint filed before a U. S. Magistrate in Chicago, Illinois, today charging him with delivering to a representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics a document relating to the national defense entitled "KH-11, System Technical Manual" which document was classified "Top Secret." The complaint alleged that Kampiles delivered the document to a Soviet by the name of "Michael" on or about March 2, 1978, in Athens, Greece, and was paid by the Soviet \$3,000 for the document.

Kampiles, a former resident of Vienna, Virginia, was employed as a watch officer for the Central Intelligence Agency from March to November, 1977. He allegedly removed the document from the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency while employed there and retained it in his possession when he moved to Chicago, Illinois, following the termination



of his employment at the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Webster stated that today's arrest was coordinated with and had the complete cooperation of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The FBI Director advised that Kampiles was born in Hammond, Indiana, and at the time of his arrest was residing at 13558 Burley Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, and employed as a sales representative for a drug company in Oak Brook, Illinois.

Kampiles will be brought before a committing magistrate as soon as possible. If convicted of the charges he could face a sentence for any term of years or life.